

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 419

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7080

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFRO, MARR, MASS, SP

SUBJ: PRESS REPORTS ON US ARMS SALES TO MOROCCO

REF: (A) MADRID 7022; (B) STATE 186606

1. WEEKEND NEWSPAPERS IN MADRID CARRIED REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK REPORTING DELIVERY IN OCTOBER OF 25 M-48 TANKS TO MOROCCO, ALLEGEDLY FIRST PART OF ORDER OF 100. NEWS REPORTS POINTED OUT THAT THIS FIRST TIME US HAS PROVIDED MOROCCO WITH THIS MODEL OF TANK, WITH CORRESPONDENCES COMMENTING OFFICIAL EXPLANATIONS IN WASHINGTON ARE CONTRADICTORY. WEEKEND REPORTS ALSO REFERRED TO SALE OF 20 F-5 AIRCRAFT, AGAIN IN INITIAL DELIVERY OF A LARGER ORDER. ARTICLE IN REGIME PAPER "ARRIBA", NOVEMBER 10, ALSO REFERS TO IMPORTANT AIR AND COMMUNICATIONS INSTALLATIONS AT KENITRA INVOLVING AMERICAN SPECIALISTS WHO HAVE ALSO BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE OF MOROCCAN AIR FORCE'S F-5 AIRCRAFT. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE IN "YA" NOVEMBER 9, "OFFICIAL" EXPLANATION FOR US ARMS DELIVERY TO MOROCCO IS POLICY TO "STRENGTHEN PRO-WESTERN TENDENCY OF KING HASSAN." ARTICLE ALSO MENTIONS PRESSURES FROM CERTAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS TO HAVE ACCESS TO
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"FERTILIZERS" IN NORTHWESTERN CORNER OF AFRICA.

2. FOLLOW-UP EFE REPORT OF NOVEMBER 12 DATED IN WASHINGTON CITES "US POLITICAL CIRCLES" TO EFFECT THAT US POLICY ON SAHARA DISPUTE HAS NOT CHANGED AND CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF "STRICT NEUTRALITY". SOURCES ADD THAT "US HAS BEEN CONSTANTLY COUNSELING MOROCCO TO FOLLOW POLICY OF PRUDENCE AND UNDERSTANDING WITH SPAIN TO FIND SOLUTION TO SAHARA PROBLEM." SAME "CIRCLES" REPORTED TO HAVE WARNED AGAINST ANY CONCLUSION THAT US HAS CHANGED ITS POLICY BECAUSE OF ARMS SALES TO MOROCCO AND ALSO AGAINST EFFORTS TO RELATE US POLICY ON SAHARA TO US ARMS SALES TO SPAIN.

3. SIMILAR LINE APPEARS IN "ARRIBA" ARTICLE NOVEMBER 12 BY NEW YORK CORRESPONDENT FELIX ORTEGA, WHO NOTES WASHINGTON SOURCES' EXPLANATION THAT ARMS SALES TO MOROCCO BASED ON "LONGSTANDING AGREEMENT" AND ARE NOT DIRECTED AT ANYONE AND SEEK ONLY TO REPLACE MOROCCAN MATERIAL LOST IN MIDDLE EAST. ELSEWHERE ARTICLE NOTES THAT FIGURE OF 25 US M-48S FOR MOROCCO APPEARS REASONABLE, BUT DOUBTS FIGURE OF 100 TANKS REPORTEDLY DESTINED FOR MOROCCO IN VIEW OF SCARCITY OF TANKS IN US ARSENAL. ARTICLE DOES NOT SPECULATE ON NUMBER OF F-5S ALLEGEDLY TO BE BOUGHT BY MOROCCANS, CLAIMING ONLY THAT THEY ARE REPLACEMENTS FOR MOROCCAN MIGS AND F-4S DESTROYED OR INSERVICEABLE.

4. COMMENT: WHILE FOLLOW-UP PRESS STORIES OF STRICT US NEUTRALITY MAY GIVE SOME COMFORT, IN PRESENT MOOD OF UNCERTAINTY SPANISH GOVERNMENT MAY REACT NEGATIVELY TO THESE REPORTS OF ADDITIONAL ARMS SALES TO MOROCCO. IF THERE IS BASIS IN FACT FOR THESE REPORTS WE SHOULD BE IN POSITION TO VOLUNTEER FULL FACTS ON EXTENT OF MILITARY SALES TO MOROCCO BEFORE SPANISH LEARN OF THEM FROM OTHER SOURCES, AS THEY ASSUREDLY WILL. MINISTRY RAISED PRECISELY THIS QUESTION ON POSSIBLE ADDITIONAL SALES OF TANKS AT THE TIME WE INITIALLY INFORMED THEM OF PROPOSED SALE (REF B) AND IT WOULD BE TO OUR ADVANTAGE TO CLARIFY THIS POINT FULLY. SIMILARLY, IF THERE IS BASIS FOR REPORTS OF PENDING SALE OF F-5S TO MOROCCANS, WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO INFORM SPANISH IN BROAD TERMS OF ARRANGEMENT. THERE IS CERTAINLY NO REASON TO BE DEFENSIVE IN THIS CASE AS SPANISH THEMSELVES WERE STILL TRYING TO SELL THEIR OWN F-5S TO MOROCCANS AS LATE AS 1973. SINCE PROMPT CLARIFICATION
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WOULD HAVE GREATEST IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS, WE WOULD APPRECIATE EITHER DEPARTMENT'S AUTHORIZATION TO DENY THESE REPORTS FLATLY, IF THEY ARE UNFOUNDED, OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WE CAN GIVE SPANISH IF REPORTS HAVE SOME BASIS IN FACT.
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Message Attributes

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Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, ARMS, PRESS COMMENTS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
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Disposition Authority: cunninfx
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Errors: N/A
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